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ABSTRACT

Trends in social studies education in the 1960's which appeared significant and which may well affect the developments of the next decade include: (1) curriculum evangelism--the zealous, uncritical pursuit of fashionable educational ideas--and the institutionalization of innovative changes, (2) restraints on intellectual freedom by the radical right and by the disenchantment of the emerging youth culture with the liberal-reformist tradition, (3) conflicting trends in international education--new programs treating Afro-Asian cultures from a non-western perspective vs. a simplistic, naive view of world affairs; state-required anti-communism courses vs. the Foreign Policy Association's K-12 program. These trends are expected to affect teacher education by focusing attention on new roles for change agents in in-service education and on the need for the systematic, somewhat protected and controlled entry into teaching. Professional literature in the 1960's has pointed up the need to prepare classroom practitioners to function "as teachers of the real world." (DJB)

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TRADITION AND CHANGE IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES: SOME OBSERVATIONS ON A DECADE OF REFORM

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In retrospect much of the debate and ferment in the social studies during the last decade appears as an essential stage in the reform process. The anachronistic character of the traditional social studies was finally recognized and alternatives were designed and tested. Nevertheless, there are also certain dangers inherent in such a period of conflict and transition. Impatience and dissatisfaction with the established order--so the history of American education suggests--seem to breed a zeal for revolt. Moreover, revolts in this sense, as Bode[1] noted in his classic critique of educational progressivism of an earlier era, may become "negative" since the tendency is to "throw out the baby with the bath."

This paper then represents an effort to reflect on that decade of the 60's and to speculate on some of the conditions or trends which appeared significant and may well affect the development of the social studies in the next decade.

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Curriculum evangelism and the "ritualization of innovation."

Curriculum evangelism may be viewed as zealous, uncritical pursuit of fashionable educational ideas, aided by advertising and funds from special interest groups including foundations and on occasion (as in the case of life adjustment education) the U. S. Office of Education.

Air age education, safety education, consumer education, airborne television and other movements have all been hailed as "breakthroughs" or "emerging horizons." Predicted the members of the National Commission on the Social Studies of the NCSS in 1958, "There is a danger that the social studies curriculum will be determined by the purses of the advocates of special programs."[2]

On occasions zeal for change seemed to obscure judgement and healthy skepticism. "Discovery" and "structure" --both important concepts in the new social studies--appeared as symbols of a cult to some writers.[3] In the literature of educational change of this period, the writings of J. Lloyd Trump and his students illustrated the hazards of the crusading zeal. "Bold" and "new" were the adjectives frequently linked with changes advocated by writers of this persuasion. All too frequently the articles on change were anecdotal and hortatory--described most aptly in Thelen's words as "the how we do it at Paducah type."[4] Those who did not jump on the bandwagon are described as "laggards" in supposedly objective studies of the time span of adoption of an innovation.[5] Critical evaluation by participants in the process of curriculum change seemed to be a dangerous act of heresy. "Any curriculum experiment," explained one prominent advocate of educational change in 1964, "calls for administrative protection against the 'doubting Thomas,' be he professional or layman."[6] According to this formula the teacher must be an "enthusiastic participant rather than a reluctant draftee." After offering the teacher this "either or" choice, the administrator is counseled to be always

ready with a replacement in the wings."[7]

Notwithstanding the appeals of faddism, many proposals for change which emerged from the last decade command respect and merit careful consideration. But unfortunately aspirations have become confused with accomplishments as converts are sought in journals, reports and speeches. Reviewers may point out, as Klohr and Frymier[8] did with reference to the Trump and Baynham report, that "great voids exist between the available data and the conclusions reported;" yet it also appears to be characteristic of research in education that influential sponsorship provides "high public visibility." Thus the pendulum swings back and forth and the "period of ritualization" as Herbert Thelen[9] calls his third and final phase of innovation, is reached. Having been "taught to teacher-trainee in the same tired way as the old techniques, the new procedures continue being used in the schools," in Thelen's words, "because nobody has the initiative to throw them out; and the once new procedures become candidates for displacement by the next big deal which comes along."

The impact of curriculum evangelism on social studies curriculum reform is illustrated in the recent, long overdue recognition of the plight of the disadvantaged student and the impact of racism on education. Yet one's appreciation of this present concern must be mixed with irony, for clearly many reform efforts in the social studies in the early 1960's seemed more intent on establishing their academic

respectability and in meeting earlier criticisms by Bestor and others of anti-intellectualism and neglect of the gifted student.

Restraints on intellectual freedom. Censorship of texts and instructional materials and intimidation of teachers have long been a part of America's educational haritage. Confusion between lay authority and professional authority, lukewarm support from professional organizations and scholars and contradictory goals of instruction have all contributed to this persistent problem. It was not therefore surprising to find such a noted liberal scholar as Carl L. Becker writing in 1944 that: "The function of high schools is to teach immature minds what is known rather than to undertake the critical examination of the foundations of what is accepted in the hope of learning something new."[10]

In the 1960's the radical right mounted a vigorous attack on the schools. Others of conservative persuasion particularly businessmen expressed great apprehension about the advent of "creeping socialism" and the inability of schools to teach the virtues of "free enterprise." Chambers of Commerce had little difficulty in persuading many school superintendents to administer to students distorted, ambiguous questionnaires on economic attitudes. Research on teacher attitudes of that period had suggested that teachers engaged in a form of "voluntary censorship," i.e., endorsing the principle of teaching about controversial issues but submitting readily to pressures to avoid topics considered taboo.[11] Recently, however, a study by Massialas

of Michigan teachers affords some ground for more optimism about the future of intellectual freedom since 80% of the teachers in the sample expressed willingness to discuss 10 of the 13 issues presented.[12]

Unfortunately (in absence of further research) the record shows that school administrators as a group failed to grasp the educational rationale underlying the examination of controversial issues in the classroom.[13] Nor, it must be added, did they distinguish themselves in defense of the exercise of academic freedom by their teachers. In a 1967 investigation in Oregon (supporting Gross' earlier research in Massachusetts) it was found that "teachers perceive sanctions [restraints on freedom of inquiry] "as originating from within the educational system rather than from within the community."[14] The reluctance of administrators to support academic freedom cannot be condoned but it can be understood since the principal and superintendent are highly visible targets for pressure groups. However, as long as the administrator clings to the "present self-concept of executive servant of the local board of education," to use Francis Keppel's words,[15] he is likely to remain only a proponent of change sanctioned by the current educational fashions.

In addition to opposition from the radical right, the practice of intellectual freedom (as we have traditionally viewed it) may suffer from the disenchantment of an emerging youth culture with the liberal-reformist tradition. While it may be true that impatient activists

confuse objectivity with neutrality, it is disturbing to observe, as Hunt and Metcalf[16] pointed out recently, that many of the young "see no inconsistency in the advocacy of free speech and denial of such freedom to their opposition." To what extent the traditional, socially irrelevant social studies curriculum of the vintage of 1916 has contributed to the alienation of youth is an interesting subject for further speculation and research. But it is becoming patently clear that there has been an erosion of the myths (or "institutionalized hypocrisies"[17] to borrow Keniston's expression) which in other periods concealed the cleavage between rhetoric and reality.

Conflicting trends in international education. The parochial ethnocentric character of the social studies was challenged in the 1960's by the advent of new programs which treated Afro-Asian cultures from a non-western perspective and imparted an understanding of the processes of cultural change, modernization and related concepts. Unfortunately, on the debit side of the ledge a popular but simplistic view persisted, i.e., the concept of the peaceful world as a "macrocosmic copy of the friendly family or friendly community or friendly face to face community."[18] This naive orientation toward world affairs is best typified by the widely publicized Glens Falls project which in a recent publication[19] suggests that fourth graders can enhance their understanding of Japan by fashioning cages for crickets, bringing flowers to class for floral arrangements, making costumes, etc.

In all fairness to school administrators, one must concede that

this curriculum approach has been nourished by a liberal-internationalist-humanitarian creed which now faces a critical challenge. In a penetrating work published in 1968 Gunnar Myrdal[20] charged that Western intellectuals have engaged in a form of self deception by entertaining "kindly illusions" about the prospects of "developing" societies of Asia. Significant questions about the economic implications of cow worship, the existence of widespread corruption, and the place of astrology in political affairs were deemed offensive and were avoided since it was clear that the impoverished lands could advance themselves by accepting Western institutions. The harsh facts of life about scholarship dissipated by sentiment have been spelled out in Asian Drama by a scholar whose credentials as a liberal and a social scientist command respect.

A comprehensive analysis of the literature of international understanding by Hunkins[21] in 1968 identified the following basic themes:

(1) cultivation of attitudes of friendliness toward other peoples

(2) knowledge of other cultures-cognitive in emphasis rather than affective

(3) strategic wisdom or the study of power politics.

The investigator found that the first two themes were dominant in the literature and concluded after analysis that all were inadequate as educational prescriptions. He offered instead a "reconstructed position" related directly to the goal of peace which would emphasize "the processes by which human associations evolve into human communities with common interests." This position does not appear inconsistent with a more concrete proposal to study "relevant utopias"

based on the models of world order postulated by Falk and Mendlovitz[22] and interpreted by Metcalf and Hunt.[23]

It is also instructive to recall that many social studies programs in the first half of the 60's became casualties in the Cold War with the public demand for special anti-communism courses, some of which still persist having been legitimitized by state laws. As an antidote to these distorted views of world affairs (which are still imbedded in courses and instructional materials) a recent study by the Foreign Policy Association on international education spells out needs, priorities and goals for a balanced, comprehensive K-12 program.

Implications for teacher education. Most of the trends or conditions treated in the preceding paragraphs have serious and far reaching implications for both the pre-service and in-service preparation of social studies teachers. It is possible within the limits of this paper to deal only briefly with a small sample of the problems; this approach should not be construed a failure to recognize the need for new models or systems. Indeed a good case can be made for revolutionary changes but the task at hand is to address problems in the social studies.

1. It is clear from the experiences with in-service education in the 1960s that traditional practices of offering more content to the teacher in NDEA Institutes, conventional workshops, etc. does not produce much change in teaching style in the classroom.[24] This is not to

deny the importance of in-service training. "In the making of a teacher," reports Rubin [25] on findings of the Center for Coordinated Education, "it is highly probable that in-service training is infinitely more important than pre-service training."

As the decade ended, attention was being focused on new roles for change agents in in-service education, e.g., the "teacher-facilitator" concept from the Center for Coordinated Education and the "field agent" role envisioned in a recently funded project at Indiana University. This mounting interest in in-service education may well pose a problem in the realignment of priorities for both Colleges of Education and Colleges of Arts and Sciences.

2. Educators have failed for some reason to provide for the systematic, and somewhat protected and controlled entry into teaching. The induction of the beginning teacher into a highly complex and demanding role is too often left to chance. One possible approach to the problem would be to implement the "portal school" concept which has emerged from extensive planning in one of the national elementary school projects. The term "portal school" is applied to schools which have agreed in advance to absorb large numbers of beginning teachers completing the pre-service phase of teacher preparation. The climate of the school would be highly conducive to innovation; new curricula, new organizational arrangements, and new applications of technology would be employed in this setting.

3. An increasing amount of professional literature in the 60's has

pointed up sharply the difficulties of re-structuring programs of pre-service teacher education which will prepare classroom practitioners to function (in the words of one noted educator) "as teachers of the real world." [26] The "real world" which faces many new social studies teachers consists in a large measure of schools marked by inter-group tensions, parental anxieties, and increasing student frustrations over the contradiction between the bland rhetoric of conventional education and the harsh reality of economic deprivation and racism. In a study of the experiences of black students in newly integrated schools of the deep south, Mark Chesler [27] found in 1967 that the teachers made no attempt to counteract the tension accompanying interracial interaction in their classrooms. Moreover there is still little evidence to indicate that social studies teachers in any significant numbers are prepared to deal effectively with value conflicts in classrooms or negotiate realistically and intelligently with community groups, school administrators and other concerned parties on issues affecting their academic freedom.

FOOTNOTES

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